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NEWS AND VIEWS

FEBRUARY 1957

The Inauguration of Union : Proposals in Full

CHURCH UNION

NEWS AND VIEWS

(New Series)

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Church Union

News and Views

(New Series)

Necessity Is Laid Upon Us

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another (John 13 : 35).

TODAY many groups of Christians co-operate. Their united labours support work like that of the Bible Society or the National Missionary Society. They work together in the Regional and National Christian Councils. They are recognised as belonging to one religious community.

But they are divided.

At the heart of their religious life is the Sacrament of Holy Communion. It is the sacred expression of their total dependence on Christ and of their unity with one another in His body. Yet some of us are unable to take Communion together. Others of us recognise no such barrier, but what kind of Communion is it that leaves us still organised in separation from one another? What kind of Communion is it that imposes no more responsibility for one another than two benevolent societies?

The Church is not a federation of voluntary groups, free to deal with each other or not as they find expedient. It consists of persons who are not their own, for they are bought with a price. And the price has been paid by one and the same Lord, whose they are. As Christians they live only as they live in Him. But Christ is not divided, so whether they will or not, His own are bound together in Him, fellow-members of the one body.

Therefore necessity is laid upon us. We are compelled to seek to express in visible unity the truth that we are His own.

It is Christ alone who has created our unity. This He did in one body through cross. We cannot go back on that without going back on Him. This is where it all began: He has "slain the enmity".

Through the years, the Church has been marred by division and other unfaithfulness. Yet in His mercy He has not taken away from it the Gospel and the Holy Spirit. This too is entirely of His grace. Our disunity means disobedience, and while none may carry the whole blame neither can any one of us refuse a heavy share in the blame. But even if one denomination had been flawless there would be nothing there of which to boast: "When ye have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do" (Luke 17 : 10). *We have purchased no claim upon God.*

No Church can enter union "with its colours flying". To do so would be to boast ourselves that we have a claim on God's grace. The truth is far simpler, far humbler for us, far more wonderful for the Gospel. It is

"Nothing in my hand I bring;

Simply to thy cross I cling".

The treasures we look for in Union are not of our bringing, but all of them of His grace. What we can give to our brethren is simply ourselves, it is the taking by the hand of a brother in Christ, the brother for whom He died.

This means that *what we seek in Church Union is unity itself*. It is not the desire to take over an unfamiliar ministry or organisation which moves us. It is not the conviction that some other denomination has in the past been more wisely led than our own, which makes us desire to be one with them. It is not the thought that there is some secure channel of grace which we or someone else has guarded, which will open to us access to God.

It is simply that, whatever our differences, we have recognised one another as within the Church of Jesus Christ from whom we have no right to be divided. It is because we who are reconciled in Christ have no right to stand aloof from one another in the tasks and opportunities of the hour. It is because we know that He has made us one that we must needs set aside the barriers which obscure that unity which He has given.

He has commanded us first to be reconciled to our brother and then to come and offer our gift on the altar. He has promised to those who come together in His name that He will be there in the midst. How he will lead us in matters of organisation and ministry and the rest which we certainly have not settled, we cannot know until we obey Him and stand together ready for His further commands. Meantime we must obey.

Impressions of a Tour in England and America on the Question of Church Union

REV. C. C. PANDE.

DURING my last tour in England and in the United States of America I covered only a small area and my contact was restricted particularly to the Methodist people in these places. The question of Church Union is quite a live question in India and quite a number of people in India are daily praying for the achievement of the Union of the Churches in this country. I found both in England and in America three distinctive feelings about Church Union.

1. The United Church in India will be a National Church.

As I moved among our Church people abroad I found that most of our people think the Church of North India and Pakistan is going to be something like the neo-nationalism of the East. As with the independence of various countries in the East there has been an exhibition of indifference and dislike to everything foreign and for those that had an influence during the foreign rule, so naturally some of our members with good will, who are anxious to maintain the ecumenical character of our Christian Fellowship seem to feel afraid that through Church Union in India the Church in India and in Pakistan will not only be autonomous and separated from each other but may also be separated from the Church of its origin, or would like to give up many things that they have enjoyed and shared within our respective Churches in a world wide heritage, and a fellowship which is beyond any barriers of nationality or any political limitations.

2. Development along the lines of existing Denominations in a world wide fellowship.

Many of our people honestly think it would be very much better and would also help towards our Christian witness if our various Churches could come together in their own denominations throughout the world as Churches within the Universal Church with an international and multi-racial Christian Fellowship within each denomination. They would like to see one Methodist Church throughout the whole world, without the difference of British or American or Australian origin, as one common Methodist Church all over the world, and similarly the Baptist, Presbyterian and Anglican Churches. In the World Methodist Conference at Lake Junaluska in North Carolina many of our very devoted and loyal members of the Church expressed this feeling. It is Natural that within our various denominations we have entered into a heritage and expressed our loyalty to Christ and to His Church as one body in our divided existence. Our loyalty to Christ and to His Church which is above all racial bounds and consideration and is supra-national.

3. Plea for one Church.

There are in India as well as among members of the Christian Church in other parts of the world, people who think the Church is one, its baptism is one, its Faith is one in Jesus Christ and it must express that oneness through one Catholic, Apostolic Church. If this has to be achieved the solution is not to

be found by merging the experiences of one Church or denomination with its heritage into another denomination. The expression of this unity in Jesus Christ and our faith and baptism has to be achieved by bringing together our heritage and experience of the power of the Holy Spirit working through various denominations into one Church which is supra-denominational.

What will the Church of India and Pakistan be?

My answer to this question is that already in our divided existence in India and Pakistan the membership of the Church is multi-racial and also supra-national. The Church of India and Pakistan will continue to maintain the Catholic fellowship throughout the world Church. The autonomous Church of India and Pakistan will continue to maintain her fellowship with the various denominations from which they have come into existence through persons (missionaries) and by our common unity in Christian Service through the tangible gift and expression of love, now in existence under different funds and allocation of grants from the various denominations of the older Churches.

The Church of India and Pakistan will never be Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian or Anglican, but will gain by bringing together our heritage and experience of our divided existence into a fuller, richer life, and according to the Spirit of our Lord, one Church, one Faith, one baptism in one Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church. Both in India and in Pakistan the divided Church cannot give a unique message and witness to our unity in our Saviour Jesus Christ through our divided existence. The brotherhood of Islam has something unique in their oneness, and we as the Church of Christ, have to give witness to a greater unity and fellowship, at least at our Lord's Table and in the Ministry of the Church. In Hinduism the followers of the Hindu faith are

different one from another in their devotion to any of their deities. One claiming to be a Hindu may be an atheist or a theist, or have faith in many expressions of gods and goddesses. In the Christian faith though we all owe allegiance to Christ we cannot express our oneness because of our denominational differences. We cannot come together at the Lord's Table because we have not all accepted a particular view of the Sacraments, so we are not in real fellowship and brotherhood, one denomination with another.

In neo-Hinduism and also in Buddhism we find their righteousness and their nearness to the divine power or the 'Holy Power' as they put it, is expressed in services of love, through medical relief, in an educational programme and various other activities of social service. The Church today is engaged in similar social service activities, in many cases as an individual denomination and in some cases through several Churches working together. By having the Church of India and Pakistan, such activities will become the efforts of the whole Church and not of any particular denomination or group of Churches. The one Church of India and Pakistan is necessary for our witness and also for bringing the Kingdom of God in Asian Countries. The whole of the Far East is looking to India for a lead in the political sphere, and it may be the will of God that through the United Church God will show the way to a permanent peace and fellowship between nations of the world, the way to an ecumenical and world wide brotherhood of nations through faith in one Lord and Saviour, and the redemption of our narrow and limited nationalism, racial prejudice and pride. The plan for the Church of North India and Pakistan is for the witness of our Christian unity in Christ throughout the world and for bringing the experiences of our separate existence for God's glory. This has to be understood with faith and sympathy by our friends in the Church outside India.

The Negotiating Committee

The Negotiating Committee, representing the six negotiating bodies, is called to meet in Pachmarhi from April 3rd to 6th, 1957. It is hoped that at this meeting the third edition of the Plan of Union will be put into final shape so that it may speedily be printed and sent for the decision of the Churches. This is a crucial meeting.

Brethren, pray for us.

The Order Of The Steps

An Explanatory Note on the Proposals for the Inauguration of Union*

RT. REV. W. Q. LASH.

I HAVE been asked to provide a Note on the Order of the Steps in the Inauguration of Union in the Church of North India and Pakistan. It is an undertaking to be approached in fear and trembling as they have been under considerable fire from various directions. It does seem to me that the Continuation Committee has done a good deal to clarify the matter. Possibly more could be done.

Step One requires little comment, as it is generally agreed that the formal inauguration should come first and be of the nature provided.

The new opening paragraphs to Step Three, the Representative Act of Unification of the Ministry, make it plain that the Inauguration itself is the vital thing, but involves not only a common membership but a unified ministry. There is probably a good variety of opinion as to how the latter can best be achieved, by long term methods or short, and if short by such a method as that of the Ceylon Scheme or another. From these varying standpoints we have come to the method set out in Step 3, and recognise it as the Representative Act which unifies the Ministry at both Presbyteral and Episcopal levels. This latter is further emphasised by the Declarations now contained in Step Four, where the effective episcopate of the Church is clearly brought into being by solemn recognition of Bishops Designate and consecration of Bishops Elect.

Step Five seems to have won general acceptance as the means of carrying into the Dioceses what has begun at the centre.

Step Two is the centre of controversy. Some such step is made necessary by the fact that there are two of the Negotiating Churches which have Bishops already, but only one which claims to have the historic episcopate, linked with the episcopate of the early Church. Somewhere, something must be done to ensure that all the existing Bishops have the link with the historic episcopate of the past which is a specific provision of the Plan which stipulates an historic as well as a

constitutional episcopate. Some ask if this is not really provided for in Step 3 where the Bishops of both Churches will lay hands on each other, but there we are carefully avoiding the intention of asking any particular gift from God which is necessary for this purpose. Some ask if Step 2 does not really provide for the episcopate of the United Church, and should therefore come more logically with the consecration of new Bishops. The answer is that Step 2 does not provide the Episcopate of the United Church. It only prepares the way for Step 3 to provide the Unified Ministry at both Presbyteral and Episcopal levels. It should therefore come before it, and would only add confusion and weaken the decisive effect of Step 3 if it did not.

There is a strong feeling in some quarters that Step 2 should be tied in more closely with Step 3. This needs serious consideration. Already by having them in one Service with the Inauguration we have moved in this direction. Possibly we could move further and make them two parts of one Step. As they are now in one Service I think it would be good to remove the word "Service" from the Preface to the Bringing Together of the Episcopates and to substitute the word "Act" or some such word. It seems to me further that the whole process would be clarified and the 'tie in' be assisted by adding some words near the beginning of paragraph (c) of this Preface, after "North India and Pakistan...". I should suggest something like this:

"both by this Act and the Representative Act of the Unification of the Ministry, in which the Bishops with the Presbyters are brought within the ministerial inheritance of all the united (or uniting) Churches, seek for...etc."

Both the Preface and the Prayer show that the Act in Step 2 is being performed within the context of the Union, but the formula of the laying on of hands makes it plain that this Act alone does not make the Bishops to be Bishops of the Church of North India and Pakistan. The further Act is necessary for

CONTINUED

on page 10.

* See the detailed proposals on p. 5 Ed—

Plan Of Church Union In North India And Pakistan

Here is the full
Proposal

Part III. Section VII : The Inauguration of Union

A. THE STEPS

1. After the decisions of each negotiating Church to enter the union have been sent in to the Secretary of the Negotiating Committee, the following shall be the procedure:—

Step 1: The Service of Inauguration of Union ; forming the Church of North India and Pakistan ;

Step 2: The Bringing together of the two Episcopates ;

Step 3: The Representative Act of the Unification of the Ministry ;

Step 4: Declaration and Confirmation of the appointment of the existing Bishops, and Consecration of new Bishops ;

Step 5: Diocesan Services of Unification.

2. *Notes:* (a) Steps 1, 2, and 3 may come within on service of Holy Communion on the morning of the first day.

(b) In the evening of that day there may be a Service of Thanksgiving, with a Sermon.

(c) Step 4 will come within a Service of Holy Communion on the morning of the second day.

(d) The forms already set out in the Suggested Services to be used with necessary modifications, and with a shortening of the first two Services.

(N. B. Note 2 d will not remain in the final form. The consequential amendments are referred to the Continuation Committee.)

B. THE SERVICE OF INAUGURATION

3. At the service of inauguration a representative of each uniting Church shall read the resolution of his Church accepting the Plan of Church Union in North India and Pakistan, and shall place on the Communion Table a copy of the Plan of Church Union in North India and Pakistan signed by the competent authority of that Church. He shall also place on the Communion Table a bound volume containing the signed statements of the Bishops, Presbyters, Deacons and Probationers of his Church declaring their assent to the Basis of Union and their acceptance of the Constitution of the Church of North India and Pakistan. The form of the declaration shall be: "I, A. B., assent to the Basis of Union as set forth in the Plan of Church Union in North India and Pakistan, and accept the Constitution of the Church of North India and Pakistan."

C. THE BRINGING TOGETHER OF THE EPISCOPATES

4. The intention of the service for the Bringing together of the Episcopates is indicated in the Preface to be read at the Service, viz :—

Preface

(a) The Churches before uniting agreed that the "Episcopate of the Church of North India and Pakistan shall be both constitutional and historic", and the Constitution of the Church defines that "historic" here means "the Episcopate which is in historic continuity with that of the early Church". By the use of this form of service the Church of North India and Pakistan in fulfilment of this agreement desires and intends to secure for the former Bishops of the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon and the former Bishops of the Methodist Church in Southern Asia authority to minister and discharge the duties of the office throughout the Church of North India and Pakistan in such a manner that no member thereof may have cause to question their authority, or to entertain any doubt or scruple in recognising and acknowledging them as Bishops in the Church of God.

(b) In particular the Church of North India and Pakistan, remembering the historical circumstances which led to the establishment of a separate Episcopate in the Methodist Church in America, intends through this service and by the grace of God, on the one hand to supply to the former Bishops of the Methodist Church in Southern Asia the special link with the Episcopate of the Primitive Church which the Anglican Communion claims to have preserved, and on the other hand to enable the former Bishops of the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon to enter into the spiritual heritage of the episcopal branch of the Methodist Communion.

(c) In humble dependence upon God, the Church of North India and Pakistan seeks for these former Bishops of the two Churches now called to be Bishops of this Church whatever of the fulness of Christ's grace, commission and authority each may need for the due performance of the functions of a Bishop in this Church, and the securing of a ministry fully accredited in the eyes of all its members, and so far as may be of the Church throughout the world.

5. The prayer before the laying-on of hands shall be the following:—

It is very meet, right and our bounden duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God; Who of Thine infinite goodness hast given Thine only and dearly-beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Redmeer, and the Author of everlasting life; Who, after that He had made perfect our redemption by His death, and was ascended into heaven, poured out His gift abundantly upon men, making some Apostles, some Prophets, some Evangelists, some Pastors and Doctors, to the edifying and making perfect His Church; Continue, we beseech Thee, Thy blessings already granted to these Thy servants called this day to a fresh dedication to Thy service, and on all of them pour out Thy Holy Spirit to enrich

each according to his need with grace and authority for the exercise of the office of Bishop in the Church of North India and Pakistan within the Church universal, that they may ever be ready to spread abroad Thy Gospel, the glad tidings of reconciliation with Thee, to minister the Word of Thy Truth and administer the Sacraments which Thou hast ordained and to use the authority given them, not to destruction but to salvation; not to hurt, but to help; so that as wise and faithful servants, giving to Thy family their portion in due season, they may be at last received into everlasting joy; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who with Thee and the Holy Ghost ever liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. Amen.

This prayer will be used before the laying-on of hands on each group of former Bishops, i. e. twice.

6. At the laying-on of hands the words used shall be as follows:—

“Forasmuch as thou wast called and duly appointed a Bishop in the..... Church and art now called to participate in a common and united Episcopate for the Church of North India and Pakistan, mayest thou receive the Holy Spirit to continue in thee His blessings already granted and to enrich thee according thy need with grace and authority for the exercise of the office of a Bishop together with us; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

D. REPRESENTATIVE ACT OF UNIFICATION OF THE MINISTRY

The Intention

7. While the act of primary importance in the Inauguration of Union is that in which the uniting Churches declare their assent to the Plan of Union, and thereby accept from God that gift of Union for the Church which He alone can bestow, it is agreed that there shall be not only a common membership of the Church but also a common and united ministry of the Word and Sacraments in order that the reconciling grace of the Holy Spirit may not be hindered.

8. No one method of the unification of the ministry is essential to a united Church. One method may provide a unification over a period of time; another may be such as to provide a unified ministry without delay.

9. For the removal of barriers to complete reconciliation within the united Church and for the avoidance of hindrances to intercommunion between it and other Churches, the method here adopted provides a unification of the ministry throughout the united Church in as short a time after the inauguration as is possible.

10. It being the intention of the uniting Churches to initiate a process of growing together into complete unity in the spiritual life, it is thus agreed that at the outset the ministry shall be unified and complete freedom of Communion throughout the Church of North India and Pakistan shall be realised. From the beginning of the union every Bishop and every Presbyter

of the united Church shall be recognized as competent to celebrate the Holy Communion in any congregation of the Church, and shall be eligible for any appointment for which he is otherwise fitted.

11. The uniting Churches mutually acknowledge each other's ministries as ministries of Christ in His Word and Sacraments, and acknowledge that all their ministries have been in God's providence manifestly used by the Holy Spirit in His work of enlightening the world, converting sinners and perfecting saints, and acknowledge that owing to their divisions, all the ministries are limited in scope and authority, not having the seal of the whole Church. They therefore accept the principle of the unification of the ministry by the mutual laying-on of hands in a solemn act of humility and rededication with prayer. In this act they seek the grace of God for the wider and more effectual fulfilment of their ministry.

12. At the inauguration of union, the existing Bishops and representative Presbyters of each of the uniting Churches shall accept through the laying-on of hands of the duly authorized persons of the other Churches uniting with them the additional authority that they lack in separation. This shall take place at solemn services, an essential part of which shall be prayer for the additional gifts that God alone can bestow.

There shall be such services in all dioceses and, at the inauguration, a representative act of unification in which each uniting Church will present before God its whole ministry, in the case of the Episcopal Churches Bishops and representatives of its Presbyters, and in the case of the Churches where the episcopal authority and functions have been embodied in the Presbytery or Presbyters, representatives of the Presbyters.

13. While recognising that there may be different interpretations of this rite, deriving from different Church traditions, the uniting Churches agree that the use of this rite does not imply a denial of the reality of the ordination previously received by those now seeking to become Presbyters in the united Church; it is not re-ordination; nor is it presumed to bestow again the grace, gifts, character or authority that have already been bestowed upon them.

14. The laying-on of hands is adopted as a scriptural and traditional symbol of the bestowing of spiritual gifts by God, and the uniting Churches intend by prayer and the laying-on of hands to seek from God for their ministers whatever of the fullness of Christ's grace, commission and authority each may need for the performance of his proper office in the Church of North India and Pakistan.

15. In particular they believe that God will assuredly so answer their prayers that any difference between ministers not hitherto episcopally ordained and those already so ordained will be thus transcended, and that by such transcending of this and other differences, as they are known to God Himself, the Church of North India and Pakistan will receive from Him at the outset a ministry fully and without exception accredited in the eyes of all its members, and, so far as may be, of the Church throughout the world.

The Procedure

16. The Bishops and Presbyters who shall participate in the representative act of unification of the ministry, shall include those Bishops of the uniting Churches who will serve in the Church of North India and Pakistan, the Presbyters elected to be Bishops, and not less than three nor more than six presbyters from each uniting Church chosen in such a way that each diocese is represented in the act of unification by at least one Presbyterian.

17. They shall declare their assent to the Basis of Union and their acceptance of the Constitution of the Church of North India and Pakistan, and with one voice shall say :—

“In the conviction that God wills one Communion and Fellowship of all who believe in His Son Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, I, believing myself to have been duly and lawfully ordained within the.....Church the ministry of the Word and Sacraments in the Church of God, am humbly prepared to commit myself to God and through the laying-on of hands with prayer to receive from Him such grace, commission and authority as it may be His will to bestow upon me for my ministry in the Church of God within the Church of North India and Pakistan.”

18. The words to be used at the laying-on of hands shall be :—

“Forasmuch as thou wast called and ordained within the.....Church to the ministry of the Church of God, and art now called to the ministry of the Church of God within the Church of North India and Pakistan, mayest thou receive from God the power and grace of the Holy Spirit to continue in these His gifts, and in accordance with His will to bestow on thee grace, commission and authority for the ministry of a Presbyterian (Bishop) of the Church of God within the Church of North India and Pakistan, and take thou authority to preach the Word of God, to fulfil the ministry of reconciliation and to minister Christ's Sacraments in the Church of North India and Pakistan; and see that thou do all these things in brotherly partnership with God's fellow-workers whom in this union of Churches He has made thine.”

19. The method shall be as follows :—

(a) The representatives, not more than three in number, of one of the uniting Churches will lay hands on the representatives of all of the other uniting Churches, using the form of

words prescribed in para 18 above. They will then rejoin their delegation.

(b) The representatives of another uniting Church will do the same, and so on until the representatives of each of the uniting Churches shall have laid their hands on the representatives of all of the other uniting Churches except their own.

(N. B. In the case of those Churches whose ministry already includes Bishops, their representatives will include a Bishop and Presbyters.)

E. DECLARATION AND CONFIRMATION OF THE APPOINTMENT OF THE EXISTING BISHOPS AND CONSECRATION OF NEW BISHOPS

20. On the morning after the Inauguration of Union, at the appointed place in the Communion Service, the instruments of election and appointment of the Bishops Designate and Bishops Elect by the central electoral body shall be read, and each Bishop Designate and each Bishop Elect, when the instrument of his election and appointment is read, shall make the following assent :—

“I.....chosen Bishop of the Church of North India and Pakistan in the Diocese ofdo give my assent to the Constitution of the Church, and do promise conformity to the principles and rules contained therein as they concern the office of a Bishop. So help me God through Jesus Christ.”

21. After the Assent has been signed by the Bishops Designate and Elect, the Bishop Presiding shall stand, together with his fellow Bishops Designate, facing the Congregation, and shall make the following Declaration :—

“We, being Bishops in the Church of God, and having entered the Ministry of the Church of North India and Pakistan by the Representative Act of the Unification of the Ministry, and having been duly elected and appointed to Dioceses within that Church, and having given our Assent to its Constitution, I declare that by that Constitution we be Bishops of the Church of North India and Pakistan, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

This Declaration all the ministers and laity present shall confirm by a hearty response: AMEN, THANKS BE TO GOD.

22. Thereafter the Bishop Presiding shall present the Bishops Elect to the Congregation in the following words :—

"These servants of God, being ministers in the Church of God, and become ministers of this Church of North India and Pakistan by the Representative Act of Unification of the Ministry, and having been duly elected and appointed to Dioceses within this Church, and having assented to its Constitution, We now purpose to consecrate Bishops of this Church, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Those present shall again respond: AMEN, THANKS BE TO GOD.

The Bishop Presiding shall then proceed with the Consecration.

F. DIOCESAN SERVICES OF UNIFICATION

23. In each Diocese the Bishop, together with the Presbyters in the Diocese who have already taken part in the Representative Act of Unification of the Ministry, will jointly unify the ministry in a service to be attended

by all the ministers of the uniting Churches serving in the diocese who assent to the Constitution of the Church of North India and Pakistan. These ministers will with one voice make the declaration given in the Service for the Unification of the Ministry (para 17).

24. The Bishop, together with the Presbyters who have taken part in the Inaugural Service, will then lay hands on all the Presbyters of the uniting Churches in the Diocese, using the same form of words as was used in the Service for the Unification of the Ministry, but with the omission of the word 'Bishop' in brackets.

25. If any of the ministers of the uniting Churches in a diocese should be unable to be present at the service for the Unification of the Ministry in that diocese, there shall be within two years a subsequent service or services for the inclusion of such ministers within the unified ministry. These services shall be conducted by the Bishop of the diocese assisted by Presbyters of the diocese.

What The Brethren Hope For In Union

REW. E. M. ZIGLER.

Some Historical Data:

THE Church of the Brethren originated in Germany in 1708 as a part of the Pietistic movement. As a result of intensive study of the New Testament with much prayer, Alexander Mack and a group of others were led to break from the established church. Persecution by the state church drove them out of Germany and after a few years the whole group migrated to America. The basic tenets of the church were: (1) the simple life, (2) No force in religion and freedom of the individual conscience, (3) Non-participation in war, with emphasis on peaceful living and peace-making, (4) no creed except the New Testament as a rule of faith and practice.

The church sacraments are (1) believers' baptism by trine immersion, and (2) the communion service including feet-washing and the supper, with the sacraments of bread and wine.

In polity the church is largely presbyterian with considerable freedom for the individual congregations. At present its communicant

members number about 200,000 of whom about 10,000 are in India.

At times in our history we have been quite separatist in so far as cooperation and intercommunion with other churches are concerned, but in recent years we have been taking a very active part in the ecumenical movement.

Our Hopes for Union:

The brief historical sketch given above may serve to explain some of our reactions as we enter the negotiations for Church Union. We are indeed hoping that union becomes a reality and that in this union the following may be achieved:

1. A real spiritual union in Christ. Organic union is a sham without spiritual oneness in love and devotion to our Lord and in a genuine fellowship with each other. Former loyalties or relationship must in no way hinder the development of this new fellowship in Christ. We must shed all spiritual pride and hold no mental reservations about each other, believing that all who by faith, repen-

tance and baptism have been spiritually redeemed by Christ, regardless of their denomination, are already members of His church universal before organic union takes place! We must believe that Christ can and will rectify any deficiency caused by human limitations in our negotiations and inauguration of the union.

2. *Increased strength without becoming a "power bloc"* The united voice of many people can have much more influence than that of their separate voices. This union, by giving encouragement and support to many weak groups, can strengthen them, and thus many times increase the power and witness of the church in this land and in the world at large. This increased power can be of tremendous value in the protection of the rights and privileges of Christians, both socially and legally. But at the same time it can also become a stumbling-block to further unity. Its very "bigness" could make us less considerate of minority groups of the Christian community who are not yet in the negotiations for union, and we may develop a "take it or leave it" attitude toward their future entrance into the union. Our enhanced power should ever be a moral power dealing with the forces of evil and unrighteousness but never used for political advantage or suppression of other groups. Within the church, also, minority groups and opinions should always find a sympathetic hearing and protection. For instance, we Brethren have always been a minority group in the pacifist faith and we would hope that the right to hold and propagate that faith would be recognized and protected just as much as modes of baptism or any matters of conscience.

3. *More effectiveness in administration.* There should certainly result a saving in over-head expense. In the fields of publication of materials and literature, and in promotion and general administration of the church, both in its personnel and operation, much duplication of effort and expense should be eliminated. Furthermore, some of us think that a bit more episcopalian polity may serve to strengthen the administration of some of our more loosely-organized type of churches. Here again we shy a bit at the possibility of misuse of power concentrated in few hands. On the other hand, however, other forms of government are not totally free from the effects of power-seeking persons who come

into positions of authority. Regardless of the possibility of such conditions arising, we must trust God to raise up through His Church worthy shepherds of the flock. We think we can be strengthened in polity, for the conditions existing today, by some such constitution as is proposed for this union.

4. *A richer worship and witness experience.* The pooling of all the various heritages of worship materials, forms, and methods should result in the enrichment of the worship of God and deepening of religious experiences. It is right that no one form of worship be imposed on the whole church. It is also desirable that all be open minded to examine other forms and materials so that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit richer worship experiences can be realized, and the spiritual foundations of the church strengthened.

Furthermore, the church will be composed of those whose doctrinal heritages are varied. Each in his own way has developed special emphases of faith and practice pointing up certain aspects of truth which may have been less emphasized by others. This fact makes possible a more complete practice and witness of the Christian faith. This should result in a more prophetic message and enhanced effectiveness in evangelism.

5. *A church in which indigenous forms and methods are free to develop to make it best suited for survival and growth in India.*—As indigenous leadership replaces foreign persons in positions of authority in the church we should expect this to happen. It would be well for us to consider now, as the pattern of the new church is being set, as to whether such things as the plan for pastors and the support of bishops and presbyters is on a basis which the church can afford. Our plan should give ample leeway for the development of new was locally adapted, for carrying on the work of the church, eliminating unsuitable western forms or practice heretofore more or less imposed upon the church by us missionaries.

The Constitution and Plan of Union

I believe that the Brethren will find little difficulty in approving the constitution which is being developed. The negotiating committee of past years has done a marvellous job of bringing together the varied forms of church polity and doctrinal tenets and practices of the negotiating bodies and working them into a unit. Some elements of all three major forms of church polity are found

In it. There is freedom for preserving the precious doctrines and forms of worship of all. Even the creedal position of the constitution is not so binding but that we Brethren can feel satisfied with it. Therefore, the constitution will likely not be a stumbling block to us. Our greatest difficulty is found in the proposed steps for Inauguration of the Union.

In this regard our thinking is about as follows: The proposed step 1 is really the vital step in the process and it includes the merger of the churches with all their functions—including the ministry and the episcopate. Therefore, no other unification ceremony is really required for legal unification. By affirmation we accept each other's baptism and ordination as valid so that no function is required to validate the membership or ministry of anyone entering the union. Our problem then is to work out meaningful ways to dramatize the unification of our varied Christian experiences. It may be desirable to dramatize the unification of various functions in the church but if we choose the bishops and the ministers only, even though they may represent the most outstanding bodies of the church, we are by omission neglecting to recognize the great functions of the deacons and laymen in the church. Should they also not have special recognition? However, instead of having separate unification services for each of these, could not all be included in one, with proper recognition of each?

In case it seems best to have a special unification service for the ministry, would it not be sufficient to have one service for all ordained persons including bishops, presbyters and deacons, in which the functions of each could be given recognition? But if there are those who for special reasons must have a step of unification of the bishops, then should not both the constitutional and historic episcopacy be recognized? The

Constitution says, "The episcopate shall be both constitutional and historic." Should not the constitutionally functional bishops of the non-episcopal churches have a part in that unification service? Otherwise it has the appearance of a step of validation of the ministry of the non-episcopal churches and our affirmations to the contrary have no meaning.

Our hope, therefore, is that even before organic union we accept each other as fellow-redeemed-of-the-Lord, making possible spiritual fellowship as individuals on an equality one with another. The union will merge our organizations, extend the now limited authorities of our ordained persons and provide for unity of our Christian ministries in the future. Could this not be symbolically carried out in three steps somewhat as follows:

Step 1—unification of the churches constitutionally—present step 1.

Step 2—unification of ordained personnel—with suitable recognition of the ministries of each and climaxed by the ordination of new bishops and appointments of existing bishops—present steps 2, 3, and 4

Step 3—unification of the heritages of faith and practices of the uniting churches, each bringing her contributions and laying them in dedication on the altar of the new church, and consummate this step with the Communion Service.

In some such way, I believe, inauguration services can be worked out which can be richly rewarding in symbolism and result in a greater reality of unity than the present Proposed steps. We do not seek in the formation of this union that all become Brethren, but we cherish the hope that we all be brethren as we unite in Christ.

CONTINUED from p. 4

that. This Act alone provides that the Episcopate of the Church shall be an historic episcopate.

I hope that it could thus be made clear that the Primary Step, in every sense of the word, is the Inauguration of the Union, and

the Secondary Step is the Representative Act of the Unification of the Ministry, to which the present Step 2 is a subordinate preliminary. Steps 4 and 5 flow naturally from the others to complete the process of Inauguration of Union which the Holy Spirit may continue and deepen as the decades succeed each other.

Recent Methodist Actions Concerning Church Union

REV. M. H. HARPER

THREE recent conferences involving the Methodist Church in Southern Asia have dealt with matter of Church Union in India.

I

The General Conference of the Methodist Church, meeting in America in May, had before it the report of the Commission on the Structure of Methodism Overseas and of the Commission on Church Union of the General Conference. As a consequence, the General Conference adopted the following resolutions regarding the subject of "Church Union in India and Pakistan":

1. "In continuing negotiations toward Church Union care be taken that assurance is given that there will be full reciprocal recognition of membership and ministry between the proposed United Church and all its predecessor denominations. That specific provision be made for continuing patterns of relationship between the proposed United Church and its predecessor denominations, perhaps after the manner of the Methodist Church with Affiliated Autonomous Methodist Churches and Kyodan."
2. "The Commission on Church Union of the Southern Asia Central Conference, having asked for guidance from the General Conference concerning aid in the continuing support for Methodist Bishops who would remain as Bishops in the proposed United Church, therefore: In the event of a Central Conference joining in a United Church, the proposals for such union having been approved by the General Conference, the support of Methodist Bishops who are effective at the time of union and who continue in that office in the United Church should be aided, if necessary, throughout their service from the Episcopal Fund in accordance with the provisions of or provisions similar to those contained in the Discipline."

A consideration of these resolutions will show that the General Conference directed its attention to several matters which will be of interest to other churches negotiating for union with the Methodist Church in Southern Asia. First, the desire is expressed that the assurance be given that there will be reciprocal recognition of membership and ministries between the Church of North India and Pakistan and all the predecessor denominations. This is a matter of vital concern to members of the Methodist Church in Southern Asia, as it is, no doubt, to members of the other negotiating churches. Concerning the reciprocal recognition of membership there will probably be little difficulty. But it is not too clear just what the situation will be with regard to the ministries. A minister of one of the predecessor churches who comes to India for a short period may preach and administer the sacraments in a congregation of the Church of North India and Pakistan, if invited to do so. But an ordained minister who seeks a permanent relationship will be received under rules yet to be determined. Since the initial unification of the negotiating churches will take place in a special service through the mutual laying-on of hands, it may be presumed that the reception of ordained ministers at a later stage may be through a similar service. The question will surely be raised, "Is this reciprocal recognition?" No such requirement is now made by the Methodist Church in the case of ministers of autonomous churches, in whose formation Methodists have shared, if they are appointed as ministers of American Methodist congregations. The wording of the General Conference resolution would imply that Methodists want the assurance to be given that the recognition now given to ordained ministers of younger churches by the parent churches, and vice versa, will continue in the United Church. This is a matter which must engage the most careful attention of the Negotiating Committee.

The second matter referred to by the General Conference concerns the maintenance of contact between the Methodist Church and

the Church of India and Pakistan. At the present time the affiliated autonomous Methodist Churches in Mexico and Brazil and the Kyodan in Japan send two fraternal delegates to the General Conference. These are seated with the delegates from the various Annual Conferences of the Methodist Church and have the privilege of taking part in the debates, but without vote. Possibly a relationship of the same sort may be established between the Church in India and Pakistan and those denominations from which the uniting churches have originated.

Considerable interest will centre in the third action of the General Conference, namely, the offer, if it should be requested by the church in India and Pakistan, to continue the support of those Methodist bishops who are effective at the time of union and who continue in that office in the united church.

These actions of the General Conference have removed doubts as to the attitude of the General Conference towards Church Union in Northern India and concerning support of Methodist bishops who may continue as bishops of the united church.

II

The World Methodist Conference, representing 18 million Methodists, in a statement addressed to the churches at the end of its recent meeting in Lake Junaluska, N.C., gave its blessings to Church Union movements in the following words:

"The conference affirms its conviction that the God-given unity of the Church is demanding in this time a fuller expression in such closer association as may be revealed to Christians of every denomination in the differing circumstances of the lands in which they live. It has heard with keen interest and deep gratitude to God of continued progress in the Church of South India, and of the plans for church union in several other parts of the world, and it prays that God will give success to every enterprise on unity attempted in His name."

This positive resolution indicates that the whole Methodist communion stands committed to the cause of Church Union wherever it is believed that Christ is calling the churches to organic unity.

III

The Central Conference of the Methodist Church in Southern Asia meeting in Lucknow in November, also gave its approval to continue negotiations towards church union in the following words:

"This Central Conference accepts the Plan of Union as a satisfactory basis for further negotiations, looking forward to final action by the Central Conference of 1960."

The Central Conference then proceeded to reconstitute the Commission on Church Union, so as to consist of all the bishops and such other members as may be elected by the Conference. The Commission was given power to appoint six of their number as negotiators on the Negotiating Committee. The procedure to be followed in consummating Church Union is carefully indicated. If the Commission on Church Union and the Executive Board of the Methodist Church agree that the revised plan of union meets the desires of the Methodist Church, the various Annual Conferences in Southern Asia are to be instructed to cast their votes for adoption or rejection of the Plan of Union. If a sufficient number of Conferences adopt the plan, the Executive Board is authorized to formulate the legislation which will be required for the consummation of union. It is expected that the Annual Conferences may be called upon to cast their votes either in 1958 or 1959. The Central Conference further instructed the Commission on Church Union to study carefully such matters as the holding of property, the control of our institutions, the handling of funds received from America and the support of bishops. A strong Commission on Church Union was appointed by the Central Conference and six negotiators have been selected. During the forthcoming months, the Commission will make a careful study of the matters remitted to it by the Central Conference.

One of the problems which has been of considerable concern to Methodists has been that of finance. The Board of Missions of the Methodist Church has given its assurance that the Methodist Church will continue to support the United Church, if desired, with personnel and finance. As already noted, the General Conference has agreed that those Methodist bishops who continue as bishops in the United Church will have their support from the Episcopal Fund. Anticipating that

there will need to be some adjustment in the scale of salaries of the general officers of the Church, the recent Central Conference adopted a new salary scale for the two new bishops selected this year. This salary scale is in line with the proposed scale for bishops in the Church of North India and Pakistan.

IV

While these actions of responsible Methodist Conferences give hope that church union in North India may be consummated within a few years' time, it should be noted, however, that there is one matter on which many Methodists still have grave misgivings. This relates to the manner of the unification of the ministries and the introduction of the epis-

copacy in the Church of North India and Pakistan. In spite of the words so carefully chosen for the Preface to the Service of Unification there is still grave doubt in the minds of some as to the real intention of this service. While this doubt remains they will find it difficult to give their approval to the Plan. Still others, although unhappy with the method proposed, are willing to participate in the service since it appears at present to be the only basis on which union can take place. Most Methodists, like many in other negotiating churches, still hope that the Holy Spirit may guide us into that kind of union in which all misgivings and doubts will be dispelled and the prayer of our Lord, "That they may all be one," will be fulfilled.

The U. C. N. I. and the Plan of Union

REV. T. H. LYLE

THE General Assembly of the U. C. N. I., which meets once every three years, met at Indore in November. I shall try to give an accurate account of how it dealt with the subject of Church Union, but shall make no attempt to be "impartial" in the sense of ignoring my own convictions. So readers will understand that someone with a different point of view might have given a different account of the same events.

Procedure

The General Assembly has a Standing Committee on Church Union (Convener, Rev. William Stewart), whose report had been printed and distributed to Assembly members. A "Commission" of about twenty members of Assembly spent one whole day studying this report and drawing up recommendations. The Commission's report was mimeographed and distributed, and, when it and the report of the Committee were officially presented to the Assembly, the Assembly discussed them and passed a number of resolutions.

This procedure should have enabled us to reach informed and well-considered decisions. Unfortunately, however, the Standing Committee's admirable report was partially out of date, as it had had to be prepared before the October meeting of the Negotiating Committee's "Continuation Committee", at which the whole material of the Plan was rearranged. I learned after the Assembly that some copies

of the Draft Rearrangement and the amendments passed by the Continuation Committee had actually been sent to Indore for the Assembly's use. It was a tragedy that we never received these.

Ignorance and Misunderstandings

But lack of up-to-date documents was not our chief difficulty; for too many of us, who came to the Assembly, were without proper previous knowledge of the Union negotiations. Most of us had no copies of the Plan, and were ignorant not only of the progress made hitherto but of the basic principles on which the Negotiators have worked. We had not been regular readers of "Church Union-News & Views"!

Our first need, therefore, was for simple, straightforward explanation of the facts and of the issues upon which decisions were required. A great misfortune was the unexpected absence, through illness, of Mr. Stewart: without his guidance we were terribly handicapped. But happily we had the Very Rev. Dr. A. Ralla Ram (who presented the Church Union Committee's report) and one or two others have been closely associated with Church Union discussions for some years; and, though there was no opportunity for systematic expositions of the Plan, these leaders endeavoured to clear up misunderstandings which were revealed in the course of discussion. To some, these

clarificatory discussions may have seemed a waste of time. Yet the educating of Ministers and Elders concerning the Plan is essential, however long it may take—otherwise it is futile to expect them to take responsible decisions.

Sense of Urgency

Despite all difficulties the Assembly as a whole showed genuine enthusiasm for the cause of Union, and—within the limits imposed by lack of up-to-date information—gladly endorsed most of the work done by the Negotiating Committee. We recorded our judgement “that the Plan does not contain any proposition repugnant to the basic convictions of the U. C. N. I.”, and our “sense of the urgency of the Lord’s call to His Church to express in visible union that unity which is His gift to His people.” Laymen, in particular, showed reluctance to be diverted from this sense of urgency by what seemed to them theological quibbles. And some Indian members, both ministerial and lay, were clearly anxious not to delay unnecessarily over objections raised by missionaries from other countries.

This impatience with anything which smacks of compromise, when Christ is calling us to unite, is fundamentally healthy. Nevertheless I myself made bold to address the Assembly, and, while assuring Indian laymen and Ministers that we foreigners have no intention of “sabotaging” the Union, urged that, having resolved to press forward to Union, we still ought to strive to ensure that the united Church will fulfil the will of Christ in other matters besides the fact of being united; and this means examining every detail of the Plan. Moreover, “foreign interference” has already been accepted from the Anglican side, in that certain prominent features of the present Plan have been incorporated largely because the C. I. P. B. C. hopes to secure the approval of Lambeth. So it is reasonable that the U. C. N. I. should likewise take into account the views of non-Anglican Churches abroad.

But do not imagine that the General Assembly refused to listen to foreigners. It recorded “heartly appreciation” of help given by partner Churches abroad by comments on the Plan, and most of the proposals accepted came from missionaries. Yet no proposal was accepted simply out of deference to missionaries’ prestige or from fear of offending

sister Churches overseas! In the General Assembly foreigners are accepted as equal partners without fear or favour. Each proposal, by whomsoever made, was considered on its merits.

The Order of Steps

Probably the most important proposal passed was that we should press for a return to the original Order of Steps, whereby the existing Anglican and M. C. S. A. Episcopates would be unified after the main act of unification of the Ministry, instead of before it. To unify the Episcopates before the Presbyterates seems to us to imply a particular theological interpretation of episcopacy which is unacceptable to the U. C. N. I., namely that the Presbyterate necessarily depends upon the Episcopate.

Some say that, if we are satisfied that the main act of unification of the Ministry provides for the handing-on of the traditions of all Churches on a basis of equality, it should not matter to us when or how the Anglican and Methodist Episcopates come together. But our primary concern is not simply to ensure that our U. C. N. I. tradition is adequately transmitted: many of us believe this could have been done without any special rite designed to unify the Ministry. Our concern is that, from the outset, all official affirmations and actions of the united Church should be such that we, with our Reformed and evangelical faith, can wholeheartedly support them. Other Churches in the Union may have to ask for special arrangements to ensure that they likewise can conscientiously support all that is done; and we willingly consent, provided that these arrangements are also meaningful and justifiable on our own principles. But we cannot consent that the united Church should do anything that is justifiable only on principles which we repudiate.

For the same reason we desire that representative Presbyters from non-episcopal Churches should take part in the unification of the existing Episcopates. We seek, not to repeat what will already have been done in the main act of unification of the Ministry, but to ensure that the rite of unification of the Episcopates will be meaningful and defensible on Reformed and evangelical principles. I learned after the Assembly that the Negotiating Committee had recently decided that the existing Episcopates should be unified

without participation by the non-episcopal Churches. Had Mr. Stewart been at Indore to tell us this, I am certain the Assembly would have expressed its disapproval and asked for the restoration of the previous form of the rite.

The same motive underlies the Assembly's instruction that a statement be circulated to our 26 Church Councils, explaining the interpretation attached by the U. C. N. I. to the proposed unification of Ministries. This statement should make plain that the proposed rite, being justifiable on Reformed and evangelical principles, will not imply any acceptance of "Anglo-Catholic" doctrines by the U. C. N. I. or by the future united Church as a whole.

Elders and Deacons

Discussion on the following three subjects was lengthy and sometimes confused:

- (a) The place of Elders in the future Church;
- (b) The place of Deacons, since the Plan, as amended, seems to intend that the Diaconate should normally be undertaken for life, not merely as a preliminary to the Presbyterate;
- (c) The place of persons without full theological training who are ordained, in special circumstances, as Presbyters of "limited authorization". Are Deacons to replace Elders? What will become of our present Lay Deacons? Will the only difference between a Presbyter of limited authorization and a Deacon be that the former may celebrate the Sacraments and the latter may not? Such questions received no conclusive answers. Eventually the Assembly, acknowledging that much must be left to be worked out after

Union is consummated, suggested that more references to Elders and Kirk Sessions might be inserted in the Plan, clarifying what functions they will fulfil in those dioceses of the future Church which wish to have them.

We passed resolution asking the Negotiating Committee to consider, as a matter of urgency, the question of the ordination of women, and, in any case, to include in the Plan some statement of the part which women will be able to play in the Church's life.

The Assembly agreed that the Church in Pakistan ought to become autonomous immediately after Union.

The Way Ahead

Finally, what about future action? The Assembly urged all Church Councils to study the Plan, and asked the Negotiating Committee to facilitate this by having the forthcoming 3rd Edition translated into the regional languages of North India and Pakistan. Further, we hope for local and regional conferences with other Churches concerned, to prepare plans for the formation of dioceses and the support of bishops, remembering that "no diocese should be so large as to make it impossible for a bishop to be a real pastor to all his people."

Experience at the Assembly confirmed that publication of documents is never enough. If we are to be roused to read the documents and grasp their significance, we must meet frequently to discuss them together, that so the "dry bones" of drafts and amendments may become "clothed" with the "flesh" of personal relationships, and be "brought to life" by the Holy Spirit as He draws us into closer fellowship in the family of God.

NEWS ITEMS

The Church in North India and in Pakistan

WOULD it be possible for there to be a single Church of North India and Pakistan? Would it be possible, within that single Church, to provide for sufficient autonomy for the parts of the Church found in each country?

In an attempt to answer these questions the Negotiating Committee proposed that there be formed a "General Synod" and "Regional Synods" one of which might cover Pakistan as a whole.

Reports of changes required to meet the needs of the Church in Pakistan, however, showed that these proposals could not meet the need without such big changes as to take away the unity originally intended. Accordingly the Continuation Committee requested the representatives of the Church in Pakistan to prepare fresh proposals on the future relations of the Church in the two countries. As a result the following proposals have been received:

1. That union of the Negotiating Churches in North India and Pakistan should bring into being two autonomous Churches in full communion, one in Pakistan and one in North India, known respectively as the Church of Pakistan and the Church of North India.

2. That there should be two separate ceremonies of inauguration of union (including the services of Inauguration of union, representative unification of the ministry, and appointment and consecration of diocesan bishops) one in India and the other shortly afterwards in Pakistan.

3. It is recommended that the bringing together of the Methodist and Anglican episcopates take place at the Indian ceremony of Inauguration of union, at which all the existing bishops of both countries would be present.

4. It is recommended that there be representative participation of the Pakistani sections of the Churches negotiating for union in the Indian ceremonies of inauguration, and of the Indian Churches in the Pakistani ceremonies of inauguration.

5. That in the choice of diocesan bishops for Pakistan, the Pakistan sections of the Negotiating Churches be authorised to proceed in accordance with the rules laid down in Part III, Chap. IV 2 of the Draft Constitution.

6. That the Negotiating Churches be urged to make sure that before union all Church property in Pakistan is held by Trust Associations registered in Pakistan.

7. That the Secretary be authorised to prepare and circulate a draft scheme for inclusion in the Constitution provision for an Inter-Church Council of the Churches of North India and Pakistan".

A Plan for an "Inter-Church" Council as mentioned in No. 7 is under preparation and will be considered by the Negotiating Committee in April.

The United Committee, representative of the Baptist Churches engaged in the negotiations for Union, gave considerable attention to the latest form of the proposals at a meeting held at the end of November, 1956. Resolutions adopted include the following :

"that this Committee is of opinion that the Draft Constitution is a document which can be commended to the prayerful consideration of the Councils' Unions".

"4. *Inauguration of Union*: (a) With reference to the procedure for the inauguration of Union this Committee would prefer a simple service which will give expression to the mutual recognition of one another's ministries as ministries of the Word and Sacraments, but it is willing to accept the proposed service of Unification in order to meet the requirements of some of the other negotiating churches, provided that this action is not interpreted as committing us to a particular interpretation of its meaning.

(b) It was noted that in the service of the Bringing Together of Episcopates (Step 2) of the six churches which are negotiating for union, four will have no part and it was *Resolved*.

that the Baptist delegation point out to the Negotiating Committee that it is very unfitting that the first act after the Inauguration of the Union will be a disunited act in which only a section of the United Church can take part, and that the purpose of Step 2 can, by suitable arrangements, be fulfilled in Step 3."

"10. *Co-operative ventures with other Churches*: It was pointed out that since Church Union cannot be merely a matter of drafting a Constitution, but its success depends upon a growing experience of fellowship and active co-operation among the churches; it was therefore *resolved* that we urge our churches to find ways of co-operative worship and action with churches of other denominations.

Pamphlets on Church Union

The Baptist Church Union Sub-committee has taken action to help the Churches to understand what is being proposed by preparing a series of "Baptist Pamphlets on Church Union" for wide distribution and translation. The first Pamphlet which is "Introductory" gives clear and simple answers to nineteen questions which include such as these :

What is meant by Church Union?

Does Church Union force everyone into the same Pattern?

What will happen to our Ministers?

Have Baptists any Contribution to make to the United Church?

Have Baptists anything to learn from Others?
Here is an enterprise that other Negotiating Churches might well copy.

A Common Catechism

Theological Colleges in South India Tackle the Problem

At the end of November, 1956, representatives of the staff and students of four theological colleges gathered at the Tamilnad Theological College, Tirumaraiyur, to discuss the possibility of preparing a common Catechism to be used by the Lutheran Churches and the Church of South India. Two of the Colleges concerned were Lutheran, the other two prepare students for the ministry of the Church of South India.

The value of the Question and Answer method for teaching both Church members and also converts from other religions was recognised by all and was expressed by the students particularly in these words :

" 1. We think that our chief need in preparing candidates for Baptism is a Catechism that can be learnt. The catechist may use, if needed, the song method of instruction in rural areas.

2. We shall be happy to use at present the catechism of our own Church, both for the preparation of converts from non-Christian religions and of Church members. But we should welcome a better and common catechism ".

The conference " revealed a sufficiently wide measure of agreement to justify the hope that further study of the possibility of a common Catechism might prove fruitful ". It concluded by each College agreeing to supply to the others material showing the catechetical work done in the areas for which it trains ministers and to appoint one member of staff to correspond and act in continuation of the enquiry.

From a Correspondent in South India.

WRITERS IN THIS NUMBER

REV. C. C. PANDE, B. A. Chairman of the Bengal District of the Methodist Church is Leader of the Church Union Delegation of the Methodist Church (British and Australian Conferences).

RT. REV. W. Q. LASH is the Bishop of Bombay (Church of India, Pakistan Burma and Ceylon)

REV. E. M. ZIGLER is a missionary and minister of the Church of the Brethren, stationed at Khergam, and is leader of the Church Union Delegation of that Church.

REV. M. H. HARPER, Principal of Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur, is Leader of the Church Union Delegation of the Methodist Church in Southern Asia.

REV. T. H. LYLE, is a missionary of the Irish Presbyterian Church, serving in the United Church of Northern India on the staff of the Gujarat United School of Theology, Ahmedabad.

REV. E. L. WENGER, a missionary of the Baptist Missionary Society, serving on the staff of Serampore College, is Leader of the Church Union delegation of the Baptist Churches.

A Common Lichen

Thological College in London, India the Problem

At the end of November, 1912, I was invited to visit the Thological College in London, India, and to give a lecture on the common lichen. The lecture was given on the 1st of December, and was attended by a large number of students and teachers. The lecture was very successful, and I received many thanks for it.

The common lichen is a very common and interesting organism. It is found in all parts of the world, and is very common in India. It is a very interesting organism, and is very common in India.

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